

Too often, our children visit ultra-modern shopping malls and gleaming sports arenas on weekends but during the week go to school in rundown or antiquated facilities. This sends exactly the wrong message to our young people about our priorities. We have to do better.

That is why I am deeply grateful to the professionals and parents in the Fort Madison Community School District. There is no question that a quality public education for every child is a top priority in that community. I salute them and wish them a very successful new school year.●

HARMONY COMMUNITY EDUCATION

● Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, in Iowa and across the United States, a new school year has begun. As you know, Iowa public schools have an excellent reputation nationwide, and Iowa students' test scores are among the highest in the Nation.

I would like to take just a few minutes today to salute the dedicated teachers, administrators, and school board members in the Harmony Community School District, and to report on their participation in a unique Federal partnership to repair and modernize school facilities.

This fall marks the 10th year of the Iowa Demonstration Construction Grant Program. That is its formal name, but it is better known among educators in Iowa as the program of Harkin grants for Iowa public schools. Since 1998, I have been fortunate to secure a total of \$121 million for the State government in Iowa, which selects worthy school districts to receive these grants for a range of renovation and repair efforts—everything from updating fire safety systems to building new schools or renovating existing facilities. In many cases, this Federal funding is used to leverage public and/or private local funding, so it often has a tremendous multiplier effect in a local school district.

The Harmony Community School District received several Harkin grants totaling \$1,198,374. A 2000 construction grant for \$315,799 was used to help build an addition to the elementary school in Bonaparte and to renovate the historic school. A 2002 grant for \$757,575 helped build an addition to the high school which included a computer lab. This grant also enabled the district to make renovations to the middle school and high school facilities and to install a new HVAC system at the high school. These schools are the modern, state-of-the-art facilities that befit the educational ambitions and excellence of this school district. Indeed, they are the kind of schools that every child in America deserves. The district also received four fire safety grants totaling \$125,000 to make improvements throughout the district.

Excellent schools do not just pop up like mushrooms after a rain. They are

the product of vision, leadership, persistence, and a tremendous amount of collaboration among local officials and concerned citizens. I salute the entire staff, administration, and governance in the Harmony Community School District. In particular, I would like to recognize the leadership of the board of education—Dennis Grossman, Tracey Hudson, Tina Denly, Cody Warth and Bill Rice and former board members Burton Mills, Barb Wellman, Dave Drummond, Myron Helmers, Steve Adam, Matt Mitchell and David Hellwieg. I would also like to recognize superintendent Joe Hundebly, former superintendents Alan Marshall and Kelly Rogers.

As we mark the 10th anniversary of the Harkin school grant program in Iowa, I am obliged to point out that many thousands of school buildings and facilities across the United States are in dire need of renovation or replacement. In my State of Iowa alone, according to a recent study, some 79 percent of public schools need to be upgraded or repaired. The harsh reality is that the average age of school buildings in the United States is nearly 50 years.

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INTERSTATE 35 COMMUNITY EDUCATION

● Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, in Iowa and across the United States, a new school year has begun. As you know, Iowa public schools have an excellent reputation nationwide, and Iowa students' test scores are among the highest in the Nation.

I would like to take just a few minutes today to salute the dedicated teachers, administrators, and school board members in the Interstate 35 Community School District, and to report on their participation in a unique Federal partnership to repair and modernize school facilities.

This fall marks the 10th year of the Iowa Demonstration Construction Grant Program. That is its formal name, but it is better known among educators in Iowa as the program of Harkin grants for Iowa public schools. Since 1998, I have been fortunate to secure a total of \$121 million for the State government in Iowa, which selects worthy school districts to receive these grants for a range of renovation and repair efforts—everything from up-

dating fire safety systems to building new schools or renovating existing facilities. In many cases, this Federal funding is used to leverage public and/or private local funding, so it often has a tremendous multiplier effect in a local school district.

The Interstate 35 Community School District received a 1998 Harkin grant totaling \$250,000 which it used to help build a classroom addition to the school in Truro. This school is a modern, state-of-the-art facility that befits the educational ambitions and excellence of this school district. Indeed, it is the kind of school facility that every child in America deserves. The district also received a 2003 fire safety grant for \$11,467 to install smoke and heat detectors and make other repairs in the school.

Excellent schools do not just pop up like mushrooms after a rain. They are the product of vision, leadership, persistence, and a tremendous amount of collaboration among local officials and concerned citizens. I salute the entire staff, administration, and governance in the Interstate 35 Community School District. In particular, I would like to recognize the leadership of the board of education—President Leah Gray, vice president Julie Brownlee, Bret Smith, Bruce McCuddin and Ken Stanley and former board members Bill Seibert, Alan Brommel, Van Brownlee, Tim Porter and Charlie Walters. I would also like to recognize superintendent Bill Maske, former superintendent Henry Eggert, business manager Lisa Brown, middle school principal Sharon McKimpson, former high school principal Tom Dannen, former elementary school principal Terrie Price and former building and grounds director Dick Downing.

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